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RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 002867

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/LOGERFO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/10/2016
TAGS: PREL ASEC CASC KPAL KWBG PHUM
SUBJECT: MGGZ01 - ISRAELI GAZA INCURSION - JERUSALEM JULY
10 SITREP

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

¶11. (C) The IDF continues its presence in central and southern Gaza. IDF raids continue, as do Qassam rocket launches. The factions claiming responsibility for the abduction of IDF corporal Gilad Shalit told the media on July 9 that they alone control Shalit's fate, and reiterated their demands for the release of jailed women and children in exchange for information on the soldier. The National and Islamic Factions in Gaza met on July 9 and have issued a call for a renewed "tahdiyya" (calm). A poll released by JMCC says that 77 percent of Palestinians support Shalit's capture, and that 67 percent support the abduction of more IDF personnel. Post is considering a second departure for American citizens from Gaza, following operations on July 8 that resulted in the successful transfer of 68 American citizens out of Gaza. Crossings other than the Nahal Oz fuel transfer station continue to be closed.

Military Developments

¶12. (SBU) The IDF continues its presence in central Gaza, between the Karni crossing and areas between the crossing and Gaza City, as well as in southern Gaza near the airport. Israeli press reports indicate that the IDF plans to intensify operations by the middle of this week, but also that the IDF seeks to move from a posture involving long-term presence in Gaza to one that would allow for raids as needed.

¶13. (SBU) The IDF continued raids over July 9 and 10, and IAF strikes have reportedly killed both Hamas gunmen in the act of launching Qassam rockets as well as civilians. Two Qassam rockets were launched at the Israeli town of Sderot on July 9; there no reports of injuries or damage.

¶14. (C) PA Security Forces reportedly found four home-made rockets in the West Bank, near Tulkaram. PA security sources told political specialist that militants intended to launch the rockets at the Israeli District Coordination Office in Tulkaram, and that those responsible are a previously unknown cell called the "al-Majd Brigades." (Comment: It is still unclear how sophisticated these rockets are; their discovery raises concerns of rocket attacks against Israel emanating from the West Bank. End comment.)

Political Developments

¶15. (SBU) The three factions that claim responsibility for the kidnapping of IDF corporal Gilad Shalit (the Izzedin al-Qassam brigades, the Popular Resistance Committees, and the Army of Islam) told the media on July 9 that only they will decide Shalit's fate. Abu Mujahed, a spokesman for one of the groups, reiterated earlier demands, which include the release of women and minor prisoners in exchange for information on Shalit. Abu Mujahed also reiterated that the negotiations file on Shalit is "closed" and said the file would only be re-opened if the factions received a serious Israeli offer to release Palestinian prisoners.

¶16. (C) Palestinian political factions met in Gaza on July 9 in the context of the National and Islamic Factions group, and agreed to renew the "tahdiyya" (cooling-off period) and to re-open negotiations for the release of Shalit. The factions supported calls by President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and Prime Minister Ismael Hanniyyah to end violence in Gaza in exchange for the end of Israeli military operations. (Comment: It is unclear that the factions have any influence over Shalit's captors. The degree of tahdiyya adherence can be measured in violence levels over the next several days. However, it is unclear whether the GOI will factor a Palestinian tahdiyya into IDF operational planning at this stage. End comment.)

¶17. (SBU) A poll by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center reported on July 10 that 77 percent of Palestinians expressed support for Shalit's capture and that 67 percent support continued Palestinian operations to capture Israeli soldiers. Further discussion of this poll and its reflection of views within Palestinian society septel.

AMCIT Update

¶18. (C) Post is exploring a second departure of American citizens from Gaza following the movement of 68 Americans from the area on July 8. Post is clarifying the number of Americans now seeking to leave. Some American citizens remain from the approximately 150 who initially requested assistance. Additionally, at least 40 new people claiming an American affiliation have been in contact with American Citizen Services requesting assistance in the wake of July 8's operation. Post is also contacting USG FSN employees in Gaza to determine if they want assistance in leaving.

Humanitarian Update

¶19. (SBU) Crossings: Karni/al-Mintar commercial crossing remained closed July 9 and 10. It was last open for four hours on July 6. According to UNRWA on July 8, it has a backlog of 230 containers of food awaiting delivery through the crossing. The Rafah passenger crossing and the Kerem Shalom and Sufa crossings all remain closed. The Nahal Oz fuel transfer station was operational July 9 and is reported to be open July 10. On July 9, USAID Gaza-based field staff reported the following amounts of fuel were delivered into Gaza:

-- 431,000 liters of diesel;
-- 146,000 liters of gasoline; and
-- 144 tons of cooking gas.

¶10. (SBU) Electricity: According to USAID Gaza-based field staff, electricity to Rafah was restored at 22:30, July 9. With the repaired line and an additional supply from Khan Younis, Rafah is expected to have up to 18 hours of electricity per day. The line from Israel into Gaza at the Karni/al-Mintar crossing was damaged during the night of July 8 and has not yet been repaired. As a result, Gaza City has electricity for only four hours per day, on an unpredictable

rotation. In northern Gaza, the electricity line which passes over the Beit Hanoun bridge, which was damaged by an air strike on July 9, was repaired. There are many reports of localized damage to the electricity network in northern Gaza, causing electricity outages in an estimated 50 percent of the area. Those areas of northern Gaza with electricity are reportedly receiving it for about 16 hours per day.

¶11. (SBU) Water: Only a five-day supply of liquid chlorine for water treatment remains in Gaza, according to World Bank sources. The World Bank continues to try to coordinate with COGAT for further deliveries. During two attempts, July 4 and 6, the truck deliveries were not permitted through the crossing. If the liquid chlorine is not imported by July 11, the CMWU plans to issue public advisories that water should be boiled, which will increase the demand for cooking gas. The World Health Organization reported July 8 that there has been a 160 percent increase in cases of diarrhea compared with the same period last year.

¶12. (SBU) Sanitation: ConGen Gaza-based Public Diplomacy Specialist confirmed that the Gaza City municipality has suspended all activities, including solid waste collection, due to the fuel shortage. Large piles of garbage have already accumulated around the city. A press release from the Gaza City municipality said that the municipality does not have sufficient fuel for sewage tanker trucks to make deliveries to the treatment plants.

¶13. (SBU) Estimated damage costs to infrastructure and agricultural assets:

(a) The head of the Beit Lahiya Municipality described to the press July 8 the damage to infrastructure in the Beit Lahiya from the IDF's recent incursion, claiming:

-- damage to roads -- USD 300,000;
-- damage to the electricity network -- USD 150,000;
-- damage to the main water network and branch networks -- USD 150,000; and
-- damage to telephone lines (cost not yet determined).

(b) USAID's contractor for their Palestinian Agribusiness Partnership Activity (PAPA) made the following assessment of damages to the agricultural sector due to IDF incursions:

-- in northern Gaza, 80 dunams of greenhouses were damaged or destroyed, an estimated 600 to 750 dunams of open fields planted with vegetables and olive and fruit trees were damaged, and an estimated 10 irrigation water wells and pipes were totally or partially destroyed;

-- in the Gaza City areas, the IDF leveled an estimated 500 dunams of agricultural land close to the Karni/al-Mintar commercial crossing and the Gaza Industrial Estate; and

-- in the Khan Younis area, 13 dunams of greenhouses and 37 dunams of olive, palm, and almond trees were completely destroyed.

WALLES